

**441—202.4(234) Selection of facility.**

**202.4(1)** Placement consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child shall be made in the least restrictive, most family-like facility available and in close proximity to the child's home. Race, color, or national origin may not be routinely considered in placement selections.

**202.4(2)** Efforts shall be made to place siblings together unless to do so would be detrimental to any of the children's physical, emotional or mental well-being. Efforts to prevent separating siblings, reasons for separating siblings, and plans to maintain sibling contact shall be documented in the child's case permanency plan.

**202.4(3)** Staff shall consider placing the child in a relative's home unless to do so would interfere with the permanency plan for the child, no relatives are available or willing to accept placement, or to do so would be detrimental to the child's physical, emotional or mental well-being. Efforts to place the child in a relative's home and reasons for using a nonrelative placement shall be documented in the child's case permanency plan.

**202.4(4)** If the child cannot be placed with a relative, foster family care shall be used for a child unless the child has problems requiring specialized service which cannot be provided in a family setting. Reasons for using a more restrictive placement shall be documented in the child's case permanency plan.

**202.4(5)** A foster family shall be selected on the basis of compatibility with the child, taking into consideration:

*a.* The extent to which interests, strengths, abilities and needs of the foster family enable the foster family members to understand, accept and provide for the individual needs of the child.

*b.* The child's individual problems, medical needs, and plans for future care.

*c.* The capacity of the foster family to understand and accept the child's case permanency plan, the needs and attitudes of the child's parents, and the relationship of the child to the parents.

*d.* The characteristics of the foster family that offer a positive experience for the child who has specific problems as a consequence of past relationships.

*e.* An environment that will cause minimum disruption of the child including few changes in placement for the child.

*f.* Rescinded IAB 4/11/07, effective 7/1/07.

**202.4(6)** A foster group care facility shall be selected on the basis of its ability to meet the needs of the child, promote the child's growth and development, and ensure physical, intellectual and emotional progress during the stay in the facility. The department shall place a child only in a licensed or approved facility which has a current purchase of service contract with the department.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 234.6(6) "b."